A Worthy Highwayman

It has sometimes appeared to me that I, Comte de Tabourd, a peer of France, was born into the world to act the part of Providence. You might suppose that such an occupation carried with it a distinction not to be acquired by ordinary men; it may be so, but at least I may be permitted to say that I have gained nothing by it either in fortune or position. Indeed, as to the former, Heaven has been kind to me; and as to the latter, a member of a family which proved its four hundred years of nobility under the ordinance of his late Majesty, King Louis XVI, needs no furtehr assistance from human favor. If I appear to complain it is only because one becomes a little weary of playing Providence to fools.

I am connected by marriage with the noble English family of Trehearne. The Trehearnes bear no title, but, as every one should understand, most of the first blood in England remains content to know itself for what it is without any acknowledgment which a sovereign can bestow. This is an indication of proper pride which commands my admiration; indeed, there is so much in England that appeals to my regard that I have myself become, as it were, part of the country, and, though I love my own best, I see less of it. In the matter of courtesy, I have no reason to complain even in unhappy times when the nations have been at war. I am, above all things, candid, and must set down the truth whatever comes of it. But all this by the way, for the episode I have set myself to relate touches only a private matter.

My English home is in a southern country, so near to London that I can make the journey in my traveling coach, with four good horses, in half a day. The Trehearnes live in the west, somewhat in the manner of little princes, and seldom come to town. Indeed, why should they? A small kingdom is more to their mind than a great city where gold is weighed against blood.

In the autumn of 1804 I received an invitation to attend the wedding of Miss Priscilla Trehearne at Polgarth, and, if possible, to come a day or two before the event in order to renew an acquaintance with the family which had been interrupted for some years. I remembered Priscilla—when I had last seen her a pretty girl just rising into womanhood; the name of the brdiegroom, Colwyn, I had never heard before. I accepted the invitation readily, and did not fail to purchase such a gift as would do equal credit to myself and the bride.

I started two or three days earlier than was necessary, in order that I might linger by the way and refresh my recollections of a country which I can never sufficiently admire. My life, I confess it without regret, has been idle, as the world judges; but it has always seemed to me that to see and enjoy beauty, to linger here and there as fancy prompts, to lend a helping hand to distress, and to make less bitter for others the cup of sorrow which has been withheld from ourself, is not to waste, but to profit by existence. The idler may have a mission as well as the butterfly, and I have yet to learn that inconveniences unnecessarily suffered lead to heaven.

In this manner I reached Exeter about the middle of the fifth day, and as there was still time to spare put up at the principal inn, which is under the shadow of the cathedral, and devoted the remainder of the light hours to exploring that charming city. On my return I made the necessary changes in my attire and descended to the public room, which, when traveling alone, I always frequent in order to escape that evening solitude which is so trying in strange surroundings. Two guests were already in the room, one of middle age, the other young. As to the former I reserved my judgment; the latter had that air of good breeding which instantly distinguishes a man of birth. The elder man struck me at first as endeavoring to appear too much at ease, an indication which I watch always with the utmost care. Excess in small matters is more an indication of character than in great.

As I made my bow a glance passed between them, and one nodded toward the table. "You, sir, I presume, make the fourth in our party tonight?"

"By seniority of age and arrival here I may claim to come first," I said. These young men are always possessed with the very devil of self-esteem.

"Have it as you will, sir; my friend meant no offence."

"Nor was any taken," said I. "I suggested the correction merely for your own satisfaction. And, after all, I may still be wrong, for your companion——"

"Here he is," said the person whom I did not like.

A young man entered at the moment, who at once impressed me more favorably than the others, in spite of the fact that he appeared to be laboring under some excitement which caused a certain jerkiness of manner. From his flushed face I suspected wine, but behind that there seemed to be a deeper cause; he had the look of a man who peers ahead through mist, and now and then catches a glimpse of sunshine and sure ground. In figure he was rather graceful than strong, his countenance open, and frankly good-natured; his eyes were more worn, I thought, than his age justified, and his mouth showed indications of hard living. But these were small matters to a man of the world, and did not seriously injure my favorable impression. He came up and joined the group, which stood, in the manner of Englishmen, about the empty fireplace.

"Well, George," said one, "have you slept?"

"Enough to make me want more," he answered.

"Such rest as that," I said, "is worse for the nerves than wakefulness."

"I believe you, sir. We turn night into day, and then find that day knows nothing about real sleep."

"You speak wisdom; why not act upon it?"

He shrugged and stretched a hand toward the cold grate; then laughed uneasily, and thrust two fingers into the pocket of his vest. "I'm afraid I can't tonight," he said. "I must keep an engagement with my friend here." He motioned toward the older man.

"Above all things an engagement must be kept."

"Exactly; and not the less because you were a fool to make it."

"Come," said the other, "that sleep seems to have put you out of humor. Wine wil make the blood sing again."

"Young blood should not need it," I said.

"Sir, you appear to be a moralist."

"There have been moralists in our family," said I, "though I do not claim to be of their number. Since we are to dine together allow me to introduce myself. I am the Comte de Tabourd, at your service, gentlemen."

The name was evidently unknown to them; one sometimes meets people, even of good birth, who are strangely ignorant of names.

"Allow me to present my friends," said the newcomer; "Captain Montague, Mr. Arthur Densham. I am George Colwyn."

I gave no indication that I recognized Mr. Colwyn's name; I make it a practice never to betray my surprise. Captain Montague was the man I did not like; the other, Mr. Densham, seemed well enough, though inclined to silence.

"Well, gentlemen," I said, "the dinner is already five minutes late; another two, and I call the landlord. Unpunctuality in an innkeeper is a greater vice than thievery; as a matter of experience, I have usually found them combined."

"Vice must needs have a companion, I suppose," said Colwyn. I thought he spoke with some bitterness.

"True," said I; "strangle one and the other languishes and dies."

"Which leaves the ground clear for a different crop," cried Captain Montague.

"If you will permit me to say so, there you are wrong. I doubt whether any vice can be acquired; it must be in the blood from the first. It may, of course, be cultivated."

"The two minutes is up," said Densham; "Monsieur le Comte——"

I had my hand upon the bell when the landlord appeared, himself carrying the first dish. He was lavish of his apologies as my late cook Alphonse Dreux of his favorite sauces. We sat down to table, I taking the head at the request of the others, and fell to.

Until you have eaten with a man you cannot be said to know his character. At table some little trait or manner may shoot a sudden light upon a spot which before was completely dark; it is not so much that he is off his guard as that he unconsciously gives you clues which, like the white thread, lead to the heart of the maze. I watched my three new acquaintances carefully; it may be that they watched me also, but as to that I neither know nor care. Captain Montague ate largely and, as I thought, without discrimination; he drank little. On the other hand, Mr. Colwyn selected carefully, played with this and that, and drank far in excess of his needs; not as a connoisseur of wine, petting the palate, but as one drinks to overcome emotion or put a false edge on shaken nerves. Both men, as it seemed to me, had an object; the one to build himself up against fatigue, the other to catch the false security of liquor. The more I observed the Captain the more strongly the impression grew on me that I had seen him before.

After the cloth was drawn and two more full bottles stood upon the table Mr. Colwyn called for cards. I was not surprised at this—indeed, I had almost expected it, since I had commenced to search my memory for a record of Captain Montague. Before the cards were brought Mr. Densham, who stood with his back to the light, close to the players, spoke.

"Once more," he said, "I protest against this play as a senseless folly. I have protested against it every night for a week; on this, the last night of the wager, I protest more strongly still."

"You mean well, Densham," said Colwyn, "and you have done what I suppose you consider your duty. On the last night, of all others, it is impossible to withdraw."

"Quite impossible," said Montague.

"The word lies with you, sir," said Densham. "You can release my friend from an undertaking which has already resulted so strangely in your favor."

"If he desires to be released——" the captain began haughtily.

"No, no!" cried Colwyn. "Densham, you exceed your duty. I ask for no quarter. The end must come soon, thank God—and then I shall sleep."

"I would suggest," said the captain, "that you and the count make another game between you." Densham made a rapid sign to me.

"I prefer to watch," said I. "At one time I played deeply; then I was cheated. After that I left the cards alone."

"As for me," said Densham, "I refuse to play. If the devil can whistle no better tune than that I shall never be one of his dancers."

He drew me aside, far enough from the table for a whispered conversation not to be overheard, but yet near enough to keep the game in sight.

"You may be surprised at my action," he said, "but I have reason for it. This Captain Montague * * * shall I weary you with a word of explanation?"

"Your confidence does me honor."

"Then I proceed. This Captain Montague fell in with us a week ago, as we journeyed from the north. He was agreeable, attached himself to us—proposed play. I refused; Mr. Colwyn accepted. After the first evening my friend, who had only lost slightly, was foolish enough to make a wager on the result of six nights' play. This is the last night. He has been losing heavily; is worn out, as you see, whilst the captain is perfectly cool. The fever of the thing has got into Colwyn's blood."

"Evidently," I said. "A more foolish story I never heard. Who is this Montague?"

"I know nothing of him. He may be——"

"A swindler?"

"I confess I have suspected it."

"Exactly—so do I, Mr. Densham. Fellows of this type are as common as highwaymen. Also, I have a faint recollection of the man; let us watch. Have you observed any cheating?"

"I have little knowledge of the game, count, so am useless as a detective."

"Let us watch," I repeated.

We drew near to the table and sat down. The game was ecarte: already Colwyn had begun to lose, and it was obvious that the captain was playing to win; but, though he exerted his skill to the utmost, he won more slowly than on previous nights, as Mr. Densham informed me, from which I concluded that our suspicions had been well founded. As the play went on Colwyn plucked up spirit from the fact that he was not being skinned as fast as usual—any encouragement is good enough for a gamester—and he grew reckless in the doubling and trebling of stakes. I would have protested if so slight an acquaintance had permitted it.

"Let him go on," Densham whispered; "he's bound to stop presently. Tonight he had only 200, and I refuse to lend. The worst is he can ill afford to lose so much."

I had been observing Captain Montague very closely, and gradually my memory recalled the man and the circumstances in which I had met him before. The thing that fixed the matter was his method of arranging his gains—the notes folded and crossed, with the gold in little piles in the angles so formed. I rubbed my hands and smiled with something of triumph.

"What is it, count?"

"I remember him," I said; "a rook. It's a pity he plays straight tonight."

"For my part," said Densham, "I'm glad of it. I've no fancy to have a duel on my hands."

"A sound kicking would meet the case."

"So much the better."

"So much the better, sir, as you say; though I have no objection to the duel as a means of settlement between men of honor.

At this moment Mr. Colwyn drew back from the table, laying his hands palms down upon it.

"It's over," he said; "you have all, captain. Unless," he added, "Densham will lend me a hundred."

"No," said Densham, "I stand by my word."

Colwyn's fingers strayed to the pocket of his vest. The captain watched him like a cat. "'Tis a pity to stop play," he said; "any trifle—a gem, even at a fancy price——"

"It is not usual," said I, "between gentlemen, for the winner to make suggestions."

"Sir," he cried, "I beg you to mind your own affairs."

"Count, I protest against any interference," said Colwyn, flushing angrily. He drew a little leather case from his pocket, opened it, and laid it on the table before him. I saw the flash of diamonds.

"Let this represent a hundred guineas, captain," he said.

"Not that!" cried Densham, starting up. I rose with him, and together we approached the players. The case contained a miniature, set in brilliants. I recognized the sweet face of Priscilla Trehearne.

"Mr. Colwyn," I cried, "for God's sake, reflect! This affects your honor. That lady is my kinswoman; I am on my way to——"

"Play!" cried Montague. "This gentleman makes himself a subject for the whip."

"As for you," I said quietly, "Mr. Jackson should have more care for himself than to be insolent."

The man changed color, but did not stop his play. Colwyn glanced at me as though he had not clearly caught what I said; then he played and lost. Captain Montague reached over, took up the miniature, and slipped it into his pocket.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Colwyn," he said, "on having lost like a man." He filled a glass with wine and drank it. Then he made a bow which included the three of us: "Gentlemen," he said, "I have the honor to wish you a very good evening."

"One moment," said I; "I am anxious to try my skill, or luck, or whatever it may be, with you. I lay a hundred guineas against the picture."

"It's worth two hundred," said Densham.

"Two hundred, then."

"Sir, if you offered five I should decline to touch a card with you," cried Montague, moving toward the door.

"Mr. Jackson was not so squeamish," I said. "It still wants an hour of midnight. Come, Mr. Jackson."

"It appears to amuse you to invent a name for me."

"Not so much, I warrant, as it profited you to invent one for yourself."

He left the room without another word, and I turned to my companions. Colwyn was sitting like a man dazed, staring at the scattered cards, now and then biting at his fingers, again feeling in the empty pocket of his vest.

"Mr. Colwyn," I said, "there is no time to be lost. As I have already told you, I am the Comte de Tabourd. I now add that I am on the way to Polgarth to be present at the marriage of my kinswoman, Miss Priscilla Trehearne, with a Mr. Colwyn, whom I take to be no other than yourself."

He nodded. "She will marry a fool," he said, "if indeed she marries me at all. That framed miniature was her betrothal gift to me."

"I admit," said I, "that you have played the fool in this instance, which should be a sufficient lesson to you to avoid the devil in future. The man who now has both your money and yours gems is, I imagine, the devil himself—else he would have been hanged long ago. Fortunately, I think he has not recognized me. If I am to be of service to you decision must be instant. I will aid you, Mr. Colwyn, on one condition. I speak, remember, as one who, for the time, represents the family into which you are about to marry."

"If you can aid me, for God's sake do it," he said.

"I take it you don't care much about the money—you want the miniature back?"

"Without it I can never show my face to her."

"Perhaps," said I, "you misunderstand women; but let that pass. You shall have the picture on condition that you swear not to play in future for high stakes, and never with a stranger."

"I will swear never to play at all."

"You go too far—I don't ask that. Extremes, believe me, are a sign of weakness. The man who fetters his will completely is like to lose it altogether."

"Then I accept the lesser oath." He took it solemnly, grasping a hand of each as he spoke.

"Now," he said, "how do you propose to prevail on this fellow to give it up?"

"I hear his horse at the door. In five minutes I shall follow."

"But I can do that as well as you."

"Doubtless," said; "but you could only recover the lady's portrait by robbery. I hope to rescue it by other means. I tell you I know the man."

"Then I shall ride with you."

"If you go at all, Mr. Colwyn," said I, "you go alone."

"The count is right," said Densham; "you must not go, George. If any help is needed I am at the count's service."

"I prefer to be alone," I said. "Even if the fellow fights I reckon myself a match for him. The Comte de Tabourd will not be worsted by a Mr. Jackson or a Captain Montague. Have I your free consent for the undertaking?"

"I am in your hands," said Colwyn gloomily. "Listen! he's starting now."

A scatter of hoofs without gave signal that the captain was off. In five minutes I had a horse saddled and was after him, with a pair of loaded pistols in the holsters, and as light a heart as I ever carried in my life.

The night was moderately clear, with a good moon. I rode through the town rapidly and struck the London road, which I assumed Montague to have taken; such cattle, after a haul, always make for the best lying-up place in the world. After a few minutes' rapid riding I pulled up and listened; the air was so still that I could hear distinctly the beat of hoofs at a distance which I calculated at half a mile. "My man goes easily," I thought, "or perhaps gold and a heavy conscience weigh him down. * * * He may keep them both, so long as Priscilla's picture gets to the right hands again. If only the poor women knew what fools they marry!"

The road before me glimmered grey in the moonlight, and over the black hedges the arch of sky throbbed with stars. Night travel puts quiet thoughts into a man, and makes him realize how the world spins on in spite of him and by no means merely for his pleasure. Even on such an errand as mine I felt the quietness slip into my heart.

In a quarter of an hour I had Montague in sight; a couple of minutes later, I had drawn level with him. He edged aside to let me pass.

"Our parting was abrupt," I said, "which, seeing that we had met before, was unfriendly. I make my apology."

He peered at me closely before replying. "I never met you before, sir, and I desire no apology. I prefer to ride alone."

"Nay, don't be churlish!" said I. "You should be in the best and most generous of spirts, seing that you have plucked your pigeon to such a pretty tune. Six nights, I think, and a most wonderful, a really most wonderful run of luck on your side?"

"A man must win sometimes."

"Assuredly, my dear sir. But I have a theory that when all the cash is gone it's hardly the thing to run on personal gems, particularly at half their value."

"Come," cried he, "what do you want? If you fancy the young idiot's diamonds they are yours at a reasonable price."

"For myself, I have no need of them. But he, in losing them, is like to have lost the esteem of the lady who is to be his wife. In these circumstances I have taken the trouble to give you the opportunity to do a generous deed."

"I am deeply obliged to you," he sneered.

"Do I understand," said I, affecting surprise, "that you intend to keep that plaything?"

"'Tis worth 200 guineas," he said.

"If it were worth a thousand," said I, "'twould make no difference to me, Mr. Jackson. I intend to take it back with me."

"Damn you and your Mr. Jackson!" he cried. "Let me tell you, sir, that I have a dose to suit both bullies and highwaymen." And he slipped his hand toward a pistol.

"Mr. Jackson," said I, "have done with this folly and save your neck. Ten years ago you were in Bath, and were kicked from the public rooms for a swindler."

"You lie!"

"You disappeared," I went on, "just in time, for certain notes that you had passed proved to be forged. I have one of them now, saved up against such a chance as fortune has now given me. In those days I was known as Monsieur Boulnois; I am now Comte de Tabourd."

I had a keen eye upon him, and saw him wince. "You are mistaken," he said, and set spurs to his horse. I was up with him in a moment and laid hand upon his rein.

"For your own sake," I said, "give me the picture."

"Pest take you and the gems!" Here," he drew the case from an inner pocket, "give me a hundred—fifty—and take the thing. I won't be hard on the young fool."

"Not a penny," said I.

"Then the devil take you both!"

As he was about to return the case to his pocket I drew a pistol, and, swinging across his horse, struck his wrist heavily with the butt. The case fell.

A bullet whizzed past my ear; before I had time to reply a second pierced the fleshy part of my right arm. I had no wish to kill the man, so rode hard at him, and, with full weight of horse and rider, took him flank-wise and sent the pair into the ditch. I was like to have followed them, but escaped by a mere inch. In a second I had dismounted, picked the case from the dust, made sure that the miniature was safe, and was in the saddle again, facing the backward road. A great cursing and groaning came from the ditch.

"Good-night, Mr. Jackson," I cried. "My address is at your service as well as the gallows! A pleasant journey to you!"

If I set out in good spirits I returned in better; for not only had I got the miniature, but felt myself secure from any further trouble. Technically, I had committed highway robbery, but my conscience was robust enough to see it in the light of justice, and certainly I had nothing to fear from a man whose life hung upon a thread. It is true that I had a wound, but I cared no more for that than a boy does for a scratch got in plundering an orchard.

I found Colwyn and Densham waiting as I had left them—the former sunk in a lethargy of weariness and despair, the latter sitting silent and, as I thought, glad to be quit of Captain Montague on any terms. Certainly Colwyn looked the most miserable prospective bridegroom I had ever seen. My entrance roused him somewhat.

"Of course," he said, "the rascal gave you the slip?"

"I left him in a ditch," I said. "I think he wasn't much hurt—he made so much noise about it. There is your miniature, Mr. Colwyn." And I laid it down on the table.

He caught it up and opened it; then, looking closely, saw blood upon it. His eyes traveled to my hand, to which a red trickle had found its way.

"Count!" he cried.

"A bullet-hole," I said, "no more. Are you anything of a surgeon, Mr. Densham? The hurt begins to grow stiff."

I stripped off my coat, and Densham went to work in a more businesslike way than I would have given him credit for.

"Count——" Colwyn began again.

"No thanks," said I. "Go to bed, boy, and wake up sane."

He rose with tears in his eyes. Did I not say that I played Providence to fools? And yet he makes an excellent husband to Priscilla, and has kept his oath to me.—Charles Kennett Burrow, in the Pall Mall Magazine.

CURRENT HUMOR

Her Eye.

(From the Kansas City Journal.)

Jaggers—So he married the widow! I thought he had his eye on the daughter?

Waggles—So he did. But the widow had her eye on him.

Still Kittenish.

(From the Brooklyn Life.)

Lawyer—As your husband died intestate, you will, of course, get a third——"

Widow—Oh, I hope to get my fourth. He was my third, you know.

A Stepmother.

(From Puck.)

First Hen—Mrs Cluckatuck is a very young-looking hen to be Gladys Cutectadarcutt's mother.

Second Hen—Oh! she'only her stepmother. Glady's mother was a patent incubator!

One on the Cook.

(From the Philadelphia Press.)

Mrs. Kauler—I noticed your husband at dinner referring to some one as "Misery!"

Hostess—Oh, that's what he calls the cook.

Mrs. Kauler—The idea! Her cooking suggested anything but misery. It was delicious.

Hostess—Oh, yes. He simply calls her that because she loves company.

Couldn't Fool Him.

(From Puck.)

Uncle John—These papers must think people is fools! It says here the elevated roads in New York carried 200,000,000 passengers inside of a year.

Uncle Silas—Maybe they did.

Uncle Josh—Shucks! There ain't that many people in the whole country!

She Was Wise.

(From the Chelsea Gazette.)

Mrs. Jones—Will you please mail this letter for me?

Letter Carrier—Certainly, madam.

Mrs. Jones—Are you a married man?

Letter Carrier—Yes.

Mrs. Jones—Well, never mind. I'll mail it myself.

No Excuse.

(From the Glascow Times.)

The Boss—If we are to retain your services, Mr. Lambkin, you must take more care of your appearance. You look as if you handn't shaved for a week.

The Clerk—But, sir, I am growing a beard.

The Boss—Thats' no excuse. You must do that sort of thing out of business hours.

What Was There.

(From the Baltimore American.)

"Tell me," he sighed, "tell me, beauteous maiden, what is in your heart."

Miss Henrietta Bean, of Boston, gave him a look of icy disdain, and then vouchsafed the monosyllabic reply:

"Blood."

Cause for Tears.

(From Brooklyn Life.)

"Why, dear, what's the matter with you? Bad news from your husband?"

"Oh, worse than that. He writes me that he is longing for me and kisses my picture every day."

"That's no reason for crying."

"Yes, but I find I put my mother's photograph in his trunk in mistake for mine."

Shop Talk.

(From the Philadelphia Press.)

"I notice you've got your summer pants on," remarked the dog fancier.

"Yes," gasped the exasperated terrier, "but they're not loud; certanly not as loud as some of this season's flannels."

"True. Nevertheless, what you need is muzzlin'."

The Latest.

(From the Chicago Post.)

"Unless there is a change," said the cook, "I will have to leave you."

"Change!" exclaimed the mistress; "what do you mean?"

"Our union," said the cook, "has declared a boycott on Mrs. Smith in the next block."

"But how does that affect me?"

"She is on your calling list, and a sympathetic strike has been declared against all who associate with her."

Another Thought.

(From the Baltimore American.)

"Nonsense," said the faith healer to the gentleman who was calling for more whisky, "you have not been snakebitten. You only think you were."

"Well," said the victim, pouring out another stiff one, "that may be all right, but the snake thought he was going to bite me, and I can't think as quick as a snake can."

Spirituality.

(From the Chicago Tribune.)

Old-fashioned Pastor—You observe no falling off in spirituality in your congregation, I hope.

Popular Young Clergyman—I think our congregation has never been as active in church work as now. The ladies' ice cream socials are excellently attended, and our last rummage sale realized $375 for the organ fund.

Darktown Proverbs.

(From the Atlanta Constitution.)

Folks what always a-sayin' de country gwine ter fall overboard 'pear ter fergit dat she kin swim well enough to keep from drownin'.

Dey may be spots on de sun, but dey ain't big enough to make you light candles.

When de people speaks dey ginrully brings de house down, en de best thing you kin do is ter stand from under.

Knew the Call.

(From the Chicago News.)

"Front!" roared the brave general, pointing his sword at the ranks of the enemy.

A meek youth came forward and bowed.

"A pitcher of ice water, or do you wish to be called at 6?"

"Who in blazes are you!"

"I am 'Front.' Used to work in a hotel before I enlisted."

She Wanted to Know.

(From the Chicago Tribune.)

They sat on the portico of the Rush Street house.

"Annie, dear," he said, "do you love me?"

She looked down at the tall, handsome youth who spoke to her with such pleading in his tones.

"You say you are soon to become the junior partner of the firm, George?"

"Yes, my own."

"And that you have $50,000 in the bank?"

"Yes, darling."

"And that you will inherit at least $500,000 from your mother?"

"Yes, pet."

"Then, George, I love you. I am yours." She fell into his outstretched arms.

Foresight.

(From the Boston Journal.)

Horatio—Me fodder knew he wuz goin' ter die ten days afore he kicked de bucket.

Elizabeth—Who told him; de sheriff?

Cruel.

(From Puck.)

The New Pastor—I'm very glad to have your husband's good opinion.

Sister Hardshell—Oh, he's quite satisfied. He says: 'What can we expect at such a salary?' "

The Trouble.

(From the Philadelphia Record.)

Mamma—No cooking class today?

May—No, ma; the teacher is sick.

"The heat, I suppose."

"No; dyspepsia."

The Expensive Part.

(From the Chicago News.)

Rural Visitor—Doesn't it cost an awful lot to live in the city?

Urbanite—No; it doesn't cost much to live; trying to keep up appearances is what paralyzes a man's bank account.

A New Definition.

(From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

"I noticed that Mr. McKinley shook hands with some Greasers, dear."

"Yes. You know what a Greaser is, don't you?"

"Of course. He's the man who oils the engine."

Yellowish.

(From the Detroit Free Press.)

The Visitor—Of course you know nothing of yellow journalism, up here.

The Villager—Wal, the ed'ter of the "Banner" he now'n agin put in items upside deown so's tew make folks read 'em. I reckon thet's sawter buff like, ain't it?

Exclusive.

(From the Baltimore American.)

Mrs. Purseproud—I see where several millionaires chartered a whole steamboat in order to come across the ocean.

Mr. Purseproud—Well, when we go over we will lease the ocean for a week.

Use for Them.

(From the Chicago Tribune.)

Johnny—Look at the elephant moving his great big fins, mamma!

Mamma—Those are his ears, dear. What use has an elephant for fins?

Johnny—Huh! I guess he can use 'em when his head swims, can't he?

Written in Dialect.

(From the Denver Post.)

"The calmest face may hide the hardest evil intent," says a writer in a Boston paper. We have observed this when looking across the table into the other fellow's calm, unruffled face while debating in our mind whether to see his hefty raise of a Johnpot or to bunch our hand and meekly pass out.

Like Papa.

(From the Brooklyn Eagle.)

Mrs. Halsey—You musn't cry when you cut yourself a little, Harold. Be a man like your papa.

Little Harold—Bu-b-but—boo-hoo—I bet you'd lick me if I said the bad things pa says when he cuts himself just a teeny bit, when he's shaving!

From the Janitor.

(From the Baltimore American.)

Mr. Topfloor, Dear Sir: Replying to your favor of January 15, stating that you must have more heat in your flat, I take pleasure in informing you that the entire building is now thoroughly heated, and in expressing the hope that you are satisfied. Mike Muggins, Janitor.

July 9, 1901.

Reciprocity.

(From the Philadelphia Press.)

"See here," said the stationer, who had just removed to a more commodious place of business, "this bill of yours is extortionate. It's an outrageous charge just for moving things."

"Oh, I don't know," replied the carter, who had had experience of the other's scale of prices, "it's no more outrageous than what you charge for stationery things."

A Tragedy.

(From the Savanna, Ill., Times.)

A Mount Carroll bachelor, out of patience with the flies which invaded his room, got two sheets of sticky fly paper, which he placed on chairs near the window. Returning late that evening he forgot the tanglefoot and sat down in one of the chairs. He soon got up and proceeded to pick the paper off the south end of his trousers. As it was a bad place to get at, he took the pants off, and while cleaning them unconsciously sat down in the other chair and then stood up and meditated.

Expensive.

(From the New York Mail and Express.)

Two tramps were trudging along a dusty road in Jersey.

"I'm goin' to New York," said one.

"Fool!" cried the other. "You'll be ruined. Don't you know what it costs to live there? Five cents to sit in the shade, $2 to spit in a car, and if you travel on the ferries there is danger of a bath which may cost you your life. Life preservers out of reach and free seats in the sun are all the rage there now, you know. The sight of that last wood pile has made you mad."

New Cause for Lightning.

(From the Atlanta Constitution.)

An old colored preacher in the rural district accounted for the lightning in this way:

"Ever' time Satan looks down en sees de Lawd's work gwine on, fire flashes f'um his eyes. Dat's de lightning. En w'en he fail ter hit a church wid it, he lays back en hollers. Dat's de thunder."

"But, passon," said an old deacon, "whar is Satan in de winter time? We don't have no lightnin' den?"

The preacher studied a minute and then said:

"Well, hit may be, Br'er Williams, dat hell's froze over den!"

A Young Bunco Man.

(From the San Francisco Bulletin.)

Tommy had been quiet for fully five minutes. He seemed to be engaged with some deep problem.

"Papa," he said.

"Well?"

"'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you'—that's the Golden Rule, isn't it, papa?"

"Yes, my son."

"And it's puffickly right to follow the Golden Rule, isn't it, papa?"

"Yes, indeed."

Tommy rose, went to the cupboard and returned with a knife and a large apple pie. The latter he placed before his astonished sire with great solemnity.

"Eat it, papa!" he said.

Marse Billy's Ghos'

In his opinion Allen was indispensable to the plantation, while, in fact, he was merely valet to his master, totally worthless, and secondary socially to a tall, handsome mulatto, Becky by name, to whom he made assiduous and unadvancing court.

Along with his love and admiration of himself and Becky (the disposal of these objectives is advised), Allen loved and admired his master and his master's wardrobe. By long and careful practice he had attained a darky imitation of the general's stately carriage, and by means both fair and foul a goodly share of his wardrobe. In justice to Allen it must be said that the way was usually fair, for the master was lavish to his servants, and Allen's "Say, Marse Billy, don't you think it's 'bout time I wuz goin' co'tin' in dis yuh coat or dese britches?" ordinarily resulted in the transfer of the article to his possession. But of all his master's sartorial belongings Allen most revered and coveted the blue military uniform, which the general donned only when performing his function of major general of the Georgia Militia.

Had Allen had his way the general would have worn them always; and by his deductions as the "gineral was a sojer of the Lord," martial garb was at least his appropriate church dress. So, despite unnumberable disappointments, on Sunday mornings the general's wakening eyes were greeted by his war equipments in conspicuous display, and when his toilet had reached the stage for outer vestments this dialogue was unfailing:

"You ain't a-thinkin' ob wearin' de uniform dis mornin,' Marse Billy?"

And the general would give grave reply, with twinkling eyes.

"No, not this morning, Allen."

One luckless day for the family and its parti-colored flock of dependents the master died. His coffin was borne to the little hillside family burying ground by a chosen coterie of his slaves, and before them, too grieved to strut or take pride in his mourning habiliments, walked Allen. And it was he who afterward, at his mistress' bidding, packed away his master's clothes in a chest in the garret, and at stated periods thereafter aired, brushed, and replaced them.

Time tempers all griefs. Before a twelvemonth had slipped away Allen no longer sorrowfully performed his office. He began to "slick" longingly and linger desirously over the black satin and velvet waistcoats, the soft doeskin breeches, and fine tucked, embroidered, and hemstitched shirts. And longest and fondest he gazed upon and caressed the military uniform. On top of all this was laid, and after a slow lowering of the lid, with stealthy peeps to see that it did not touch the precious garments, Allen would lock the chest and carry the key to his mistress.

"They're all breshed an' packed, Miss Rachel, an' ready an' waitin' for Marse Billy an' Gabriel's trumpet," he would unvaryingly say. "I sot de sojer clothes on top. Marse Billy'll be wantin' dem de very fus' t'ing ter march again de debbil an' de angels ob sin. An' I rebbed dem buttons tell dey shine like lightnin' bugs."

"It was clean against all intention to shet dem clothes away in de da'k whar nobuddy could see 'em," he often said to himself. "They wuz meant for a great an' shinin' light, an' Miss Rachel combinated a deadly sin in not sendin' dem to Marse Tom (the only son) to w'ar, or gib um to somebody dat would." And in fancy Allen loved to see himself arrayed in all that splendor of blue cloth and brass buttons and epaulets and stepping round, perforce, like the "Gineral hisself."

Intense longing and thought soon brought action. One Sunday evening Allen stole up to the garret, donned the uniform, and sallied forth on his formal weekly visit to the invincible Becky.

"Dat gal'll be scairt ter def w'en she opens de do'," he chuckled on the way. "She'll t'ink Marse Billy's sperret done come back sho'."

Becky was startled; but, like a kind, wise woman, she kept Allen's secret, and for many a Sunday evening he wore undetected the glorious dress. One cloudy moonlight night, however, he was encountered by two negroes. The far-down tilted hat hid his features; but the dress, the walk, were Marse Billy's, hence it was his ghost that passed by them. Again and again it was seen, till the whole black portion of the plantation was buzzing and terrified with stories of the ghost. Now it was seen in the cornfield. Now it traversed the cotton field, and once the ghost became so bold—but this was wholly untrue—it was discovered one noontide stooping and drinking from the spring that had furnished the general's favorite draught. Its exit was usually in a flash of red or blue lightning, but once it just quietly dissolved into the darkness at a cry from a frightened beholder.

Allen was not behind with stories of the uncarnate visitor. He solemnly declared he had seen Marse Billy; had shaken hands with him, "drappin'" dead (fainting) immediately thereupon, and when he came to life again found Marse Billy bending over him in tenderest solicitude, which sight instantly caused another lapse into oblivion. The hand that had touched the phantom palm remained cold for several days afterward, and this, Allen reasoned, showed conclusively the heavenliness of the "sperret's" abode. Becky, too, admitted with laughing eyes and an enviable display of fine teeth, that she had seen Marse Billy, or something that looked mighty like him.

In the height of the excitement there came to the plantation a grandson, in stature, features, and blackness of hair and eyes the prototype of his grandsire. But now, with his hollowed cheeks and eyesockets and ghastly pallor, the results of a long sickness, his grandmother pronounced him the ghost of the rich, dark, youthful beauty of his grandfather.

The grandmother had become a little petulant of the unallayable terror of the negroes, and the foolish stories that were spreading over the country, and immediately upon the grandson's arrival, applied to him for a solution of the mystery and a remedy.

"It is only one of the negroes who is wearing grandfather's clothes," he positively decided. "The only way to stop the nonsense is to catch the fellow redhanded, and expose him to the rest," and learning the favorite walk of the ghost, the next Sunday evening after sunset betook himself thither.

About 8:30 o'clock his watch was rewarded. Footsteps came, and by the rapidly waning twilight he saw approaching a person clad in the well-remembered uniform of the major general. It was a negro, and to find out the desecrator he stealthily followed him. And unconscious of his Nemesis, Allen, stiff of back, sight, and hearing, completely absorbed in soliloquy, slowly measured the path through the cornfield.

"Dem niggers bin talkin' so much 'bout Marse Billy's ghos', they've kinder got Miss Rachel ter believin' it too. But Marse Billy ain't comin' back. He's res'in' too good an' easy in his grabe ter be wantin' ter do dat. Abraham's got him safe in his bosom 'long wid Isaac an' Adam an' Lax'rus, an' he's lookin' down dar at de rich man in de lake of fire an' brimstone, beggin' fur one drap ob water ter cool his burnin' tongue. Yes, Marse Billy's res'in too easy up dar, an' he ain't botherin' his hade wedder his close is locked up dar in de chist ober Miss Rachel's hade or I'se warin' dem. He ain't gwine ter want dese clothes tell Jedgement Day w'en Gabriel's trumpet calls de lambs an' de goats outer dere grabes. Marse Billy's wearin' de clothes of righteousness, washed white in de blood of de lamb."

Allen was very fond of preaching, and these remarks being delivered in the darky minister's style, a sermon was suggested, and he began to exhort an imaginary congregation.

"Yes, Marse Billy's wearin' dem garments, an' how did he git um, an' dat sof' seat in Abraham's bosom, long wid Noey an' Lazarus an' Isaac? Did he get um by stealin' an' lyin' an' barin' false witness against his neighbor man an' neighbor woman? No, he got um by walkin' in de way dat Abraham an' Lazarus an' Noey p'inted out to him. Dey always walked wid him, a cloud in de daytime, an' a pillar ob burnin' fire by night. Dey showed de ha'd an' narrer path, an' Marse Billy walked dar day an' night, sleepin' an' wakin'. W'en he come down in de cawnfiel' an' de cottonfiel', did he come down dar by hisse'f? No, Lazarus an' Abraham an' Noey wuz wid him. An' we'n Christmas come roun' an' de niggers say, "Christmas gif', Marse Billy, did his han' go down in his pocket by hisse'f? No. Abraham an' Noey run dere han' down wid his, an' hope bring up——"

Here Becky's cabin was reached, and Allen was immediately engulfed in its fire-lighted interior.

The shutter of the small square of unglazed window was open, and the young man stepped up and looked in. Directly opposite, trig and bolt upright, sat Allen, and near by was the tittering Becky, to whom her suitor's airs were an endless amusement. At the moment the ghost white face appeared Allen chanced to be looking up at the window, and with a hoarse cry he started up, pointing with shaking finger at the aperture.

"What's de matter?" asked Becky, whose eyes had followed the direction of his finger, and met only the calm, faintly starred sky. "Is you seein' Marse Billy's ghos' fer sho?" with an explosion of laughter.

Allen's answer was a grasp of the hand, hard with terror and anger.

Young Benton was not without a spice of mischief, so he readily took the role that was thrust upon him, and again he put his face into the window, this time staring wide-eyed and solemnly at Allen.

Becky saw him now. Furious with fright she fell upon the luckless Allen with heavy yellow fists.

"Dat's Marse Billy, an' he wants dem clothes," she yelled. "Gib um ter him, an' let him go, too."

Instantly the coat was wrenched off and hurled through the window. Unminding buttons and "galluses," waistcoat, and breeches were striped off and followed, and, himself a not-to-be-despised ghost in his white underwear, Allen flung wide the door and shot homeward.

The next morning he was summoned by his mistress, and confronted with the torn and soiled uniform.

"These clothes were found last night near Beckey's cabin, Allen," she said. "How do you suppose they came here?"

"Law, Miss Rachel, I dunno," replied Allen, ashy, and shaking with the palsy of superstitious fear. They's no tellin' what's gwine ter happen in dis wicked ole wuld."

"It's strange," the mistress ruminated aloud for effect. "I don't know who would have dared take them out of the chest. Anyhow, take them, and clean them thoroughly, and bring them back to me."

Anxious to maintain a wide distance between himself and that direful uniform, Allen retreated as Miss Rachel advanced.

"Not 'less you uses fo'ce, Miss Rachel. I—I don't want ter teech dem clothes. I don't b'lieve Marse Billy likes me ter fool wid dem anyhow, an' no good eber comes ob crossin' dead folks' wishes."

Force was not used, and never again could Allen be induced to enter the garret alone, or "tech dem clothes." And never again did he cross Becky's threshold.

"She jes' darded him ter come down dar," she would say, with a threatening motion of her head. "She wasn't gwine ter have sperrets larnin' de way down ter her house, an' folks dat had um followin' dem aroun' couldn't keep company wid her." And never again, it is perhaps needless to say, was the plantation visited by Marse Billy's ghos'.—Amelia Wofford in the New York Commercial Advertiser.

THE ARCHERY OF OLD.

A Law Prescribing the Minimum Distance to Be Shot Over.

In England shooting with the longbow was for centuries the chief national pastime, and its practice was enforced by several acts of Parliament. Two kinds of arrows were used—first, the flight arrow, a long, thin arrow, with plain iron point, which was employed only for long-distance shooting; second, the sheaf arrow, a heavier shaft than the former, tipped with a jagged, barbed iron head, two-pronged like a fork, which was the weapon for short ranges. By an act of Henry VIII, it was forbidden for any man over twenty-four years old to shoot at a mark nearer than 220 yards with a flight arrow, or 140 yards with a sheaf arrow. The old English archers, however, justly celebrated as they were for the long range and precision of their shots, could not accomplish more than 600 yards. The greatest range which our modern bowmen can attain is from 300 to 400 yards. In 1795 the Turkish Ambassador attended a meeting of the Toxopholite Society in London, and there shot against the wind 415 yards, and with the wind 463 yards. He had a short Turkish bow, and a very light arrow twenty-five inches long, with small feathers.

In bygone days, therefore, when our ancestors were famous and formidable with the longbow, the shooting grounds attached to every town, if not also village, in the Kingdom, answered to the volunteer rifle ranges of modern times. It would appear, however, that the annual meetings of the National Rifle Association had their counterpart in the open competitions which were frequently held in the neighborhood of Finsbury. There is extant "A plan of all the marks belonging to the Honorable Artillery Company in the fields near Finsbury with the true distances as they stood anno 1737, for the use of longbows, crossbows, hand guns, and artillery." Eight or ten fields are included in the plan, and the whole length of this early Bisley appears to be one mile, by about 400 yards wide. The longest distance between any two marks is 265 yards. What may be termed the first international shooting competition was held on the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," when the English crossbowmen matched themselves in friendly rivalry against the French. The range was twelvescore yards, and the English team, which included Henry VIII in person, came off easy winners.

The bow for several centuries after the invention of smallarms was considered the more perfect weapon, and did not disappear from the English army until 1627. Charles II, on his restoration, did much toward the revival of archery. During that reign important meetings were held at Hampton Court and in Hyde Park, and attracted as many as 7,000 archers and crossbowmen from all parts of the country. The crossbowmen shot nearly twenty score yards, and to the amazement of spectators made excellent shooting at that distance. At one of these meetings in Hyde Park, three regiments of foot, which were being drilled in the vicinity, threw down their clumsy muskets in disgust, and broke their ranks to go and watch the old national pastime. These displays generally concluded with showers of whistling arrows, which are supposed to have been used by the picket guards to give notice to the camp of the enemy's approach during the night. From that period until the latter part of the eighteenth century, archery appears to have been almost forgotten, and then was only revived as a fashionable and pleasing amusement. The Toxopholite Society was founded in 1780 by Sir Ashton Lever.—London Globe.